

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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SUBJECT: YAR-PDRY RELATIONS: IS THE CHILL BEGINNING TO EBB?

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: COLLATERAL WITH OFFICIAL YARG STATEMENT MARCH 10 WELCOMING TENTATIVE MOVE BY SAUDI ARABIA AND PDRY TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS HAVE BEEN SEVERAL INDICATIONS YTHHAT YAR ITSELF ATTEMPTING CREATE BETTER CLIMATE FOR IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH ADEN REGIME. OVER PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, THE ACTIVITIES OF THE YAR-PDRY JOINT COMMISSIONS HAVE INCREASED NOTICEABLY, AND THERE ARE REPORTS THAT YARG HAS RECENTLY RELEASED FROM PRISON SIGNIFICANT NUMBER PDRY-SPONSORED GUERRILLAS (REFERRED TO AS MUQAWWAMA) AND THEIR SYMPATHIZERS. BORDER INCIDENTS IN NORTH YEMEN LARGELY NON-EXISTENT PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, AND EMBASSY RECENTLY RECEIVED UNCONFIRMED REPORT OF SUBSTANTIAL WITHDRAWAL OF PARATROOP UNITS WHICH IN 1974/75 INSULATED NADIRA-DAMT REGION FROM BRUNT OF PDRY-SPONSORED ATTACKS. THESE WITHDRAWALS COME AT TIME WHEN THERE ARE ADDITIONAL INDICATIONS THAT YARG PERMITTING OR AT LEAST ACCEPTING RETURN OF SOME MUQAWWAMA TO AREAS IN WADI BANA REGION. ALTHOUGH NOT KNOWN WHETHER THESE MOVES CALCULATED TO CREATE MORE FACORABLE CLIMATE WITH PDRY, IT IS CERTAIN THAT YARG RECOGNIZED THAT IT STANDS

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TO GAIN CONSIDERABLY FROM ANY GENUINE RAPPROCHEMENT

BETWEEN THE ADEN REGIME AND THE STATES OF SOUTH ARABIA. END SUMMARY.

2. LIKE PRESIDENT IRYANI BEFORE HIM, HAMDI HAS CONTINUED POLICY OF AT LEAST GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF THE YAR-PDRY UNITY TALKS. IN RECENT MONTHS, HOWEVER, RELATIONS APPERR TO HAVE ACTUALLY WARMED. JOINT COMMISSIONS -- PARTICULARLY THE ECONOMIC AND MILITARY COMMISSIONS--APPEAR TO BE MEETING REGULARLY AND, IN THE CASE OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION, OFTEN WITH CONSIDERABLE LOCAL PUBLICITY. MEETINGS OF JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION IN PAST USUALLY CONFINED TO BORDER TOWNS, BUT ON APRIL 20 MEETING WAS HELD IN SANA.

3. IN ANY EVENT, SOME SMALL SCALE ECONOMIC COOPERATION FINALLY BEING WORKED OUT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. BOTH YEMENS RECENTLY AGREED, FOR INSTANCE, TO UN PROPOSAL TO PLACE TWO SIMILAR PROJECTS IN LOCUST CONTROL AND FEEDER ROAD CONSTRUCTION UNDER SINGLE UN REGIONAL UMBRELLA RATHER THWH HAVE THEM HANDLED SEPARATELY AS PART OF THE NATIONAL UNDP PROGRAMS. LOCUST CONTROL PROJECT WILL PROBABLY VV AHEAD THIS YEAR, ALTHOUGH FEEDER ROAD PROGRAMS CURRENTLY FORESTALLED BY LACK OF FUNDS.

4. PDRY FONMIN MUTI' VISITED SANA LAST MARCH AND

INFORMED YARG OF IMPENDING SAUDI-PDRY NORMALIZATION. THIS PDRY GESTURE MUCH APPRECIATED BY YARG OFFICIALS, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW ABSENCE OF SIMILAR MOVE BY SAUDI ARABIA. NO HIGH-RANKING YAR FIGURE HAS YET VISITED SOUTH YQEN, BUT IN MARCH THERE WERE RUMORS HAMDI MIGHT VISIT ADEN TO RETURN PDRY PRESIDENT RUBA'I ALI'S 1974 TRIP TO TAIZ AND HODEIDA.

5. AT SAME TIME, EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED REPORT THAT OVER FORTY PDRY SYMPATHIZERS AND/OR MUQAWWAMA ARRESTED IN DAMT BORDER REGION IN 1974/75 HAVE BEEN RELEASED BY YARG AUTHORITIES OVER PAST TWO MONTHS. OF MORE POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE IS ADDITIONAL REPORT -- STILL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNCONFIRMED-- THAT LARGE PROPORTION OF ABD AL-ALLEM'S PARATROOPERS HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM AMMAR BORDER REGION. PARATROOPERS INITIALLY SENT TO THIS REGION IN 1974 IN LARGELY SUCCESSFUL YAR BID TO REMOVE MUQAWWAMA PRESENCE FROM THE AREA AND RESTORE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTROL WHICH, UNDER PRESIDENT IRYANI, WAS LARGELY LACKING.

6. FOR PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, MORDER AREA HAS BEEN

LARGELY QUIET. THIS DUE IN PART TO YARG' GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE AREA BUT PERHAPS ALSO DUE TO PDRY RETICENCE TO ESCALATE CONFLICT. IRONICALLY, ONLY MAJOR BORDER ACTION NOTED THIS YEEAR WAS INITATED, NOT BY PDRY-SPONSORED MUQAWWAMA, BUT BY HUSAYN 'ASHAL'S EXILED NATIONAL UNITY FRONT WHICH ATTEMPTED SMALL-SCALE PENETRATION OF PDRY'S THIRD GOVERNORATE IN LATE JANUARY.

7. ADDITIONALLY, THERE INDICATIONS THAT RELATIVELY LARGE NUMBER OF MUQAWWAMA (SOME WITH FAMILITES) HAVE

STARTED TO RETURN TO AREAS ON NORTHERN SIDE YAR-PDRY BORDER, APPARENTLY WITH YARG ACCEPTANCE. MANY OF THESE INDICIDUALS WERE ORIGINALLY RESIDENTS IN WADI AND SURROUNDING AREA WHO, AFTER RECEIVING ARMS AND/OR TRAINING FROM THE SOUTH AND ENGAGING IN SMALL-SCALE MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN THHEIR HOME REIONS, WERE FORCED ACROSS THE BORDER BY LOCAL TRIBAL LEVIES OR ABD AL-ALLEM'S PARATROOPERS.

8. ACCORDING TO SEVERAL YEMENI-AMERICANS LIVING IN THE AREA, LOCAL YARG OFFICIALS ARE AWARE OF THE RETURN OF THESE GROUPS. BUT, AS IN CASE OF COMMISSIONER OF NADIRA DISTRICT, MANY OFFICIALS HAVE SPREAD THE WORD THAT THE MUQAWWAMA ARE WELCOME TO RETURN AS LONG AS THHIR RESENCE IS PEACEFUL.

9. COMMENT: WITH SAUDI ARABIA MOVING TO BOLSTER ITS ALREADY CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE YAR WHILE INITIATING NEW ERA WITH PDRY, NOT SURPRISING THAT SANA AND ADEN SHOULD BEGIN TO BUILD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FRAMEWORK FOR WIDE-RANGING RECONCILIATION AS WELL. MOVEMENT IN THIS DIRECTION HAS BEEN MORE SYMBOLIC THAN REAL, BUT IF PDRY-SPONSORED MUQAWWAMA ACTIVITES TRULY AT AN END AND IF REPORTS OF YAR PRISONER RELEASES AND BORDER TROOP WITHDRAWALS ACCURATE, IT MIGHT NOW BE POSSIBLE FOR THE TWO YEMENS TO CONSIDER MORE SUBSTANTIVE COOPERATION IN VARIOUS DEVELOPMENTAL AND ECONOMIC FIELDS ALONG THE LINES ALREADY TAKEN WITH CERTAIN UNDP PROJECTS. END COMMENT.
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